[(“ ‘ ’ ”)]
FRAMES OF REFERENCE

APPROPRIATE APPROPRIATIONS

This is a show about recycling. It is about adopting an element from someone else, from somewhere else, and molding it into an expression of oneself. Whether that means juxtapositions are set up to make one question the difference between "objects of art" and everyday "objects of life," a duplication of images from a familiar source, or merely an appropriation of a familiar style. This exhibition shows the thin line which separates "fine" art from the rest of the world.

All of the images in this show are familiar, whether in content or in style. We see them in newspapers, magazines, movies and on television. Our culture is saturated by media and advertising, a saturation that has accelerated during the past thirty years with the introduction and widespread acquisition of TV. It is inevitable that this media bombardment affect the aesthetics of today's artist. The formerly separate, "outside" worlds of advertising, journalism, film, and television are present in these works of art. The public world is internalized, made personal through the interpretation of each artist.

Most of the work has a very clean, graphic look to it. Walking through the galleries is like flipping through the pages of a glossy magazine: the images are hard-hitting, easily recognizable, haunting in their clarity. It is interesting that many of the artists use commercial art processes in the execution of their work--paste-ups, photo silkscreen, photography. This use of media imagery and techniques is deliberate; the blatant presence of commercial images is there to be questioned. As the producer, the artists are commenting not only on the influence media-derived imagery has had on their work, but on the effect that these recognizable images have had on their audience--the consumer.

In keeping with the theme of the show, I have chosen artists' words to convey my points. The pages that follow present an eclectic collection of quotations. The sources are varied, the contexts are diverse. Consider these passages food for thought; analogies are implied and encouraged. "Play a little. I'll play a little."

Nora Halpern

May 6 - June 4, 1982

Whitney Museum of American Art, Downtown Branch

Michael Harvey, Stop Light, *1982, acrylic on canvas, two panels, 76 x 16¼", 46 x 54". Metro Pictures, New York.*

"Technical reproduction can put the copy of the original into situations which would be out of reach for the original itself. Above all, it enables the original to meet the beholder halfway, be it in the form of a photograph or phonographic record. The cathedral leaves its locale to be received in the studio of a lover of art; the choral production, performed in an auditorium or in the open air, resounds in the drawing room."[1]

MICHAEL HARVEY

Born in Leicester, England, 1944

Selected Solo Exhibition

1975 International Cultural Center, Antwerp
1977 Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva
1980 P.S.1, New York
1981 Metro Pictures, New York
1982 Hallwalls, Buffalo, New York

Selected Group Exhibitions

1972 Documenta V, Kassel, West Germany
1973 Paula Cooper Gallery, New York, "Drawings"
1977 Franklin Furnace, New York, "Notebooks, Scripts and Scores"
1978 Artists Space, New York, "Audio Works"
1980 Metro Pictures, New York, "Opening Group Exhibition"

Selected Articles and Reviews

Shelly Rice, "Film as Installation," *Artforum,* Volume IX, No.11 (September, 1980), p.71

Roberta Smith, "Art," *The Village Voice,* Volume XXVI, No. 19 (May 6, 1981), p.83

Elizabeth Frank, "Michael Harvey at Metro Pictures, *Art in America,* Volume 69, No. 7 (Summer, 1981), p.132

Stephen Davis, "Michael Harvey," *Arts Magazine,* Volume 55, No. 10 (June, 1981), p.5

Robert Morris, "American Quartet," *Art in America,* Volume 69, No. 11 (December, 1981)

[1] Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illusions,* translated by Harry Zohn, (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), p. 220

Gretchen Bender, Untitled *(from* The Pleasure is Back *series), silkscreened enamel on sign tin, 48 x 78''. Collection of the artist.*

GRETCHEN BENDER

Born in Seaford, Delaware, 1951

Selected Group Exhibitions

1981 Hallwalls, Buffalo, New York, "Fictive Victims"
1982 Artists Space, New York, "A Likely Story"
White Columns, New York, "Art for Covers"
Chromo-Zone, Toronto, Canada, "New York Group Show"

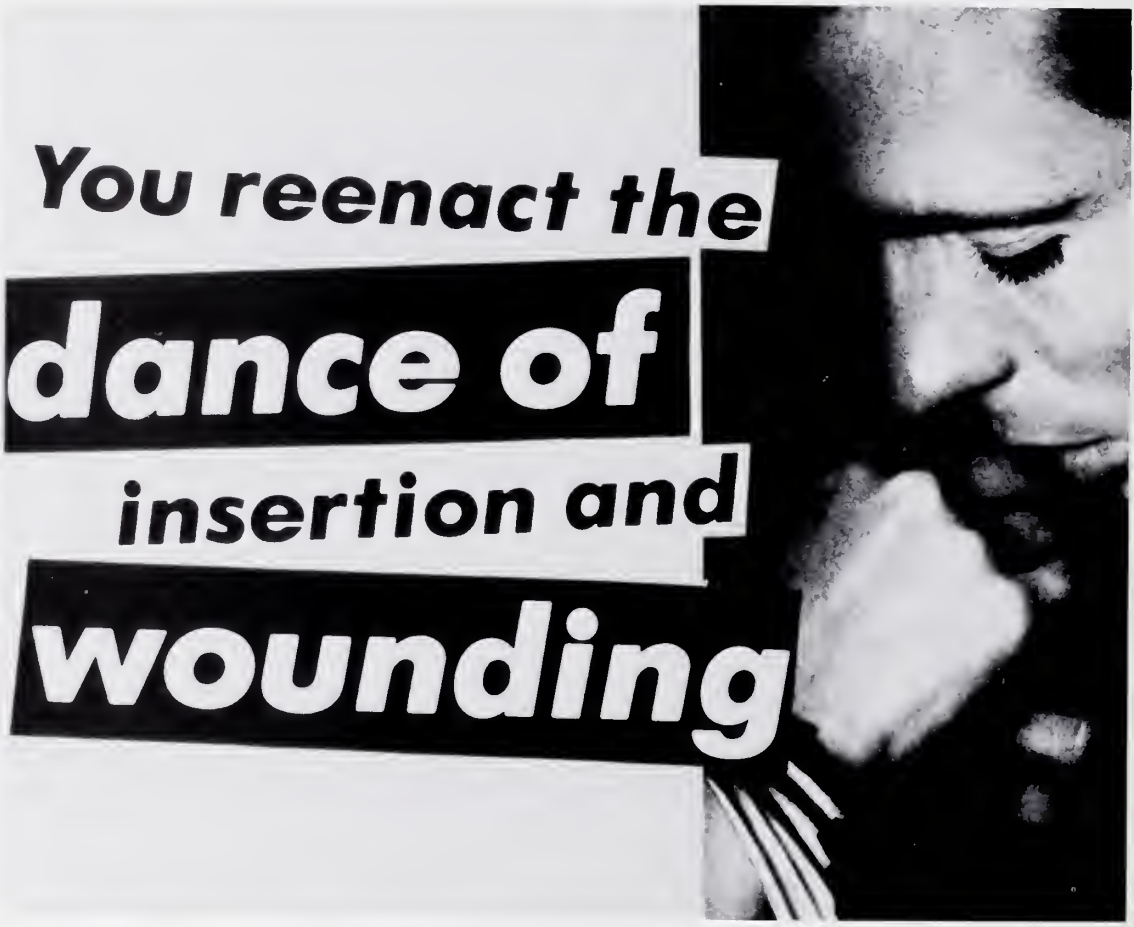
Selected Articles and Reviews

Valerie Smith, "Fictive Victims," exhibition catalogue, Hallwalls, Buffalo, New York, 1981

Gerald Mazorati, "Art Picks: A Likely Story," *The Soho News,* (March 3, 1982) p.23

"The images in advertising art in American culture have become neutralized by the effects of visual saturation. A similar issue has happened in the art world. Combining the two seemingly disparate sensibilities synthesizes something compelling out of this visual numbness. The seduction of the image is emphasized, while the cumulative effect of visual saturation is acknowledged. This is not merely a form of recombinations but a movement through channels." [2]

[2] Gretchen Bender, unpublished artist's statement, 1982



Barbara Kruger, You Reenact the Dance of Insertion and Wounding, *1981, black and white photograph, 40 x 50''. Collection of the artist.*

"Younger artists did not view pop culture as relaxation, but as an ongoing part of their lives. They felt no pressure to give up the culture they had grown up in. Their art was not the consequence of renunciation but of incorporation."[3]

"My production, contextualized within the art sub-culture, consists, to some degree, of replicating certain pictures and words and watching them stray from or coincide with the notions of fact and fiction."[4]

BARBARA KRUGER

Born in Newark, New Jersey, 1945

Selected Solo Exhibitions

1973 Artists Space, New York
1975 Fischbach Gallery, New York
1976 John Doyle Gallery, Chicago
1982 Larry Gagosian Gallery, Los Angeles
1982 Hallwalls/CEPA Gallery, Buffalo, New York

Selected Group Exhibitions

1975 Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, "1973 Biennial Exhibition"
1979 Rosa Esman Gallery, New York, "Object/Image/Text"
1981 The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, "Public Address"

Selected Articles and Reviews

Ross Bleckner, "Transcendent Anti-Fetishism," *Artforum,* Volume XVII, No. 7 (March, 1979), p. 50

Peter Frank, "19 Emergent Americans," exhibition catalogue, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, 1981

Carrie Rickey, "Pictures and Promises," *Artforum,* Volume XIX, No. 7 (March, 1981), p.84

Carrie Rickey, "19 Americans," *Artforum,* Volume XIX, No. 8 (April, 1981), p.58

[3] Lawrence Alloway, *Pop Art* (New York: The Whitney Museum of American Art, 1974) p.7

[4] Barbara Kruger, unpublished artist's statement, 1982

Thomas Lawson, Teen Star Has Cancer, *1981, oil stick on canvas 48 x 48''. Metro Pictures, New York.*

THOMAS LAWSON

Born in Glasgow, Scotland, 1951

Selected Solo Exhibitions

1977 Artists Space, New York

Selected Group Exhibitions

1979 Artists Space, New York and tour, "Four Artists"
1980 Brooke Alexander, Inc., New York, "Illustration and Allegory"
1981 Nigel Greenwood Gallery, London, "Real Life Magazine Presents"
1982 The Drawing Center, New York, "New Drawing in America" P.S.1., New York, "Eight Critical Perspectives"

Selected Articles and Reviews

Thomas Lawson, "Four Artists: James Birrell, Michael Davey, Gareth Fisher, Thomas Lawson," exhibition catalogue, Artists Space, New York 1979

Carter Ratcliff, "Illustration and Allegory," exhibition catalogue, Brooke Alexander, Inc., New York, 1980

Carrie Rickey, *The Village Voice,* Volume XXV, No. 2 (January 14, 1980), p.78

Joan Casademont, "Thomas Lawson, Metro Pictures," *Artforum,* Volume XX, No. 1 (September, 1981), p.86

Thomas Lawson, "Last Exit: Painting," *Artforum,* Volume XX, No. 2 (October, 1981), p.40

Valentine Tatransky, "Figuring," exhibition catalogue, Hallwalls, Buffalo, New York, 1981

Valentine Tatransky, "Fischl, Lawson, Robinson, and Zwack," *Arts Magazine,* Volume 55, No. 10 (June, 1981), p.147

John Roberts, *"Real Life Magazine* Presents . . . at Nigel Greenwood," *Artscribe,* No. 32 (December, 1982)

"For their pictures, these artists have turned to the available images in the culture around them. But they subvert the standard signifying function of those pictures, tied to their captions, their commentaries, their narrative sequences—tied that is, to the illusion that they are directly transparent to a signified. Walter Benjamin's dictum that a caption will become the most important component of the shot is taken as prophetic." [5]

[5] Douglas Crimp, *Pictures,* (New York: Committee for the Visual Arts Inc., 1977) p.5

Robert Longo, Untitled, *1981, charcoal, graphite, silkscreen ink and tempera on paper, 60 x 96''. Collection of Barbara and Eugene Schwartz, New York.*

"Going back to the figure is going back to the source. Nothing is new. Going back to the figure is going back to the begining. It's what you look at in newspapers, on TV--attacking the viewer, getting him interested. It's not about the figure or about representation. It's about re-representation."[6]

ROBERT LONGO

Born in Brooklyn, New York, 1953

Selected Solo Exhibitions and Performances

1976 Hallwalls, Buffalo, New York, "Object Fictions"
1978 Franklin Furnace, New York, "Sound Distance of a Good Man"
1981 Metro Pictures, New York
Larry Gagosian Gallery, Los Angeles
1982 Texas Gallery, Houston

Selected Group Exhibitions and Performances

1976 Hallwalls, Buffalo, New York, "Noise"
1977 Artists Space, New York and tour, "Pictures"
1980 Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, "Extensions: Jennifer Bartlett, Lynda Benglis, Robert Longo, Judy Pfaff"
1981 Wave Hill, New York, "Tableaux"
Museen der Stadt Koln, Cologne, West Germany, "Westkunst: Heute"
Hayden Gallery, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, "Body Language: Figurative Aspects of Recent Art"
1982 The Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, "Eight Artists: The Anxious Edge"

Selected Articles and Reviews

Douglas Crimp, "Pictures," exhibition catalogue, Artists Space, New York, 1977

Thomas Lawson, "Pictures at Artists Space," *Art in America,* Volume 66, No. 1 (January-February, 1978), p.118

Linda Cathcart, "Extensions: Jennifer Bartlett, Lynda Benglis, Robert Longo, Judy Pfaff," exhibition catalogue, Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, 1980

Craig Owens, "The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Post-Modernism," *October 12* (Spring, 1980)

Carter Ratcliff, "Illustration and Allegory," exhibition catalogue, Brooke Alexander Gallery, Inc., New York, 1980

Barry Blinderman, "Robert Longo's 'Men in the Cities': Quotes and Commentary," *Arts Magazine,* Volume 55, No. 7 (March, 1981), p.92

Kay Larson, "Sculpting Figuratively," *New York Magazine,* Volume 14, No. 45 (November 16, 1981), p.120

Kim Levin, "New York Reviews: Robert Longo, Metro Pictures," *Flash Art,* No. 102 (March-April, 1981), p.40

Carter Ratcliff, "Robert Longo," *Flash Art,* No. 103 (Summer, 1981), p.30

Ronald J. Onorato, "Desperadoes and Madonnas," *Art Express,* Volume 2, No. 1 (January-February, 1982), p.20

[6] Robert Longo, unpublished artist's statement, 1982

Cindy Sherman, Untitled, *1980, black and white photograph, 8 x 10''. Metro Pictures, New York.*

"The camera introduces us to unconscious optics as does psychoanalysis to unconscious impulses." [7]

CINDY SHERMAN

Born in Glen Ridge, New Jersey, 1954

Selected Solo Exhibitions

1976 Hallwalls, Buffalo, New York
1980 Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston
Metro Pictures, New York
1981 Metro Pictures, New York
Young/Hoffman Gallery, Chicago

Selected Group Exhibitions

1975 Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York
1979 Max Protetch Gallery, New York, "Re-figuration"
1980 Lisson Gallery, London, "An International Exhibition of Fourteen New Artists"
1981 Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Ohio, "Young Americans"
Hayden Gallery, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, "Body Language: Figurative Aspects of Recent Art"
1982 Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, "Eight Artists: The Anxious Edge"

Selected Articles and Reviews

Douglas Crimp, "Pictures," *October 8* (Spring, 1979)

Valentine Tatransky, "Cindy Sherman at Artists Space," *Arts Magazine,* Volume 53, No. 5 (January, 1979), p.19

Linda Cathcart, "Cindy Sherman: Photographs," exhibition catalogue, Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, 1980

Michel Nuridsany, "Ils se Disent Peintres, Ils se Disent Photographes," exhibition catalogue, Arc/Musee d'Art Moderne, Paris, 1980

Douglas Crimp, "Cindy Sherman: Making Pictures for the Camera," exhibition catalogue, *Young Americans,* Allen Memorial Art Museum. Oberlin College, Ohio, 1981

Michael Klein, "Cindy Sherman," *Arts Magazine,* Volume 55, No. 7 (March, 1981), p.5

Roberta Smith, "Art," *Village Voice,* Volume XXVI, No. 47 (November 18, 1981), p.98

Jamey Gambrell, "Cindy Sherman, Metro Pictures," *Artforum,* Volume XX, No. 6 (February, 1982), p.85

Peter Schjeldahl, "Shermanettes," *Art in America,* Volume 70, No. 3 (March, 1982), p.110

[7] Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illusions,* translated by Harry Zohn, (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), p.220

Richard Prince, Untitled, *1980, color photograph, 20 x 24''. Metro Pictures, New York.*

"The enlargement of a snapshot does not simply render more precise what in any case was visible, though unclear; it reveals entirely new structural formation of the subject." [8]

"You walk down the street. And you look at something. Something pedestrian. Something familiar. Something that has been familiar to you all your life. You stand and stare but you just don't know what it is anymore. Past treatments are applied. Former conditions impressed. The convenience of hindsight is dispatched."[9]

RICHARD PRINCE

Born in the Panama Canal Zone, 1949

Selected Solo Exhibitions

1976 Ellen Sragow Gallery, New York
1978 Galerie Jollenbeek, Cologne, West Germany
1980 Artists Space, New York
1981 Metro Pictures, New York
Jancar/Kuhlenschmidt, Los Angeles

Selected Group Exhibitions

1979 Castelli Graphics, New York, "Pictures: Photographs" Hartford Art School, University of Hartford, Connecticut, "Imitation of Life"
1980 Texas Gallery, Houston, "Selected by Marvin Heiferman"
Arc/Musee d'Art Moderne, Paris, "Ils se Disent Peintres, Ils se Disent Photographes"
1981 Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin Ohio, "New Voices 2:6 Photographers/Concept/Theater/Fiction"

Selected Articles and Reviews

Douglas Crimp, "The Photographic Activity of Postmodernism," *October 15,* (Winter, 1980)

Michael Klein, "Richard Prince," *Arts Magazine,* Volume 55, No. 7 (March, 1981), p.9

William Olander, "6 Photographers: Concept/Theater/Fiction," *Bulletin,* Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio, 1981

Richard Prince, "War Pictures," *ZG Magazine,* No. 3, 1981

Valentine Tatransky, "Richard Prince/Michael Zwack," *Arts Magazine,* Volume 55, No. 9 (May, 1981), p.34

[7] Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illusions,* translated by Harry Zohn, (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), p.236

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The exhibition was organized by Nora Halpern, University of California at Los Angeles, Helena Rubinstein Fellow in the Whitney Independent Study Program, with the assistance of the other Fellows: Tony Corn, Universite de Paris 7; Dana Friis-Hansen, Carleton College; Anne Harrell, Florida State University; Virginia Kobler, University of Washington; Ellen Mahoney, Smith College; Theresa Salazar, University of New Mexico; Sarah Taylor States, Guilford College and Susan Wilharm, University of California at San Diego.

The Downtown Branch of the Whitney Museum of American Art is operated under the direction of Lisa Phillips, Associate Curator, Branch Museums with Karl Willers, Assistant Branch Manager. The Downtown Branch is supported by the business community of Lower Manhattan.

CHECKLIST

Dimensions are given in inches; height precedes width.

1. Gretchen Bender (b. 1951)
Untitled (from *The Pleasure is Back* series), 1982
Silkscreened enamel on sign tin, 48 x 78
Collection of the artist

2. Gretchen Bender
Untitled (from *The Pleasure is Back* series) 1982
Silkscreened enamel on sign tin, 72 x 72
Collection of the artist

3. Michael Harvey (b. 1944)
Stop Light, 1982
Acrylic on canvas, two panels, 76 x 16¼, 46 x 54
Metro Pictures, New York

4. Barbara Kruger (b. 1945)
You Reenact the Dance of Insertion and Wounding, 1982
Black and white photograph, 40 x 50
Collection of the artist

5. Barbara Kruger
You Have Divided and Conquered, 1982
Black and white photograph, 40 x 56
Collection of the artist

6. Thomas Lawson (b. 1951)
Battered Body in Freezer, 1981
Oil on canvas, 48 x 48
Chase Manhattan Bank, New York

7. Thomas Lawson
Teen Star Has Cancer, 1981
Oil stick on canvas, 48 x 48
Metro Pictures, New York

8. Robert Longo (b. 1953)
Untitled, 1981
Charcoal and graphite on paper, 96 x 60
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Saatchi, London

9. Robert Longo
Untitled, 1981
Charcoal, graphite, silkscreen ink and tempera on paper, 60 x 96
Collection of Barbara and Eugene Schwartz, New York

10. Richard Prince (b. 1949)
Untitled, 1980
Black and white photograph, 20 x 24
Metro Pictures, New York

11. Richard Prince
Untitled, 1980
Black and white photograph, 20 x 24
Metro Pictures, New York

12. Richard Prince
Untitled, 1980
Black and white photograph, 20 x 24
Metro Pictures, New York

13. Cindy Sherman (b. 1954)
Untitled, 1977
Black and white photograph, 8 x 10
Metro Pictures, New York

14. Cindy Sherman
Untitled Film Still, 1978
Black and white photograph, 8 x 10
Metro Pictures, New York

15. Cindy Sherman
Untitled, 1980
Black and white photograph, 8 x 10
Metro Pictures, New York

16. Cindy Sherman
Untitled, 1980
Color photograph, 20 x 24
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Saatchi, London

17. Cindy Sherman
Untitled, 1980
Color photograph, 20 x 24
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Saatchi, London

18. Cindy Sherman
Untitled, 1980
Color photograph, 20 x 24
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Saatchi, London

19. Cindy Sherman
Untitled, 1981
Color photograph, 24 x 48
Metro Pictures, New York

"Our fine arts were developed, their types and uses were established in times very different from the present, by men whose power of action upon things was insignificant in comparison to ours. But the amazing growth of our techniques, the adaptability and precision they have attained, the idea and habits they are creating, make it a certainty that profound changes are impending in the ancient craft of the Beautiful. In all the arts there is a physical component which cannot remain unaffected by our modern knowledge and power. For the last twenty years neither matter nor space nor time has been what it was from time immemorial. We must expect great innovations to transform the entire technique of the arts, thereby affecting artistic invention itself and perhaps even bringing about an amazing change in our very notion of art." [10]

[10] Paul Valery, "The Conquest of Ubiquity," in *Aesthetics,* translated by Ralph Manheim (New York: Pantheon Books, Bollingen Series, 1964), p.225